



Friends OF THE COURT

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Arkansas Supreme Court Ranks Second in Nation In University of Chicago Law School Study

The Arkansas Supreme Court received high marks in a study that was made public in May as part of a University of Chicago Law School working paper series. The study examined state high court decisions from 1998 to 2000 and placed numerical values on three measures of court performance: productivity, independence, and opinion-quality. When the three measures of performance were placed in a composite ranking and

given equal weight, the Arkansas Supreme Court ranked second in the nation. Moreover, after examining various ways of combining the three performance measures, the study cited Arkansas as one of the "top contenders" for best high court in the nation. Arkansas also ranked third in the number of opinions written by each justice per year, leading the study's authors to note that Arkansas is a "traditionally overlooked state" that

"may deserve more credit."

"Which States Have the Best (and Worst) High Courts?" was authored by Professor Stephen Choi of New York University Law School, Professor Mitu Gulati of Duke University Law School, and Professor Eric Posner of the University of Chicago Law School. It can be downloaded from the Social Science Research Network Electronic Paper Collection (<http://ssrn.com/abstract=1130358>).



Justice Building Employees Continue To "Go Green"

Several Justice Building employees are getting back to nature and also making less demand on gasoline supplies. Ben Houston (AOC) and his wife Greta (Court of Appeals) are growing vegetables. Stephen Cohen (AOC) and his wife, and Wade Hankins and Jack Garvey (AOC) are car pooling two days a week to and from work, since they live in Conway.

The Houstons have rented from Pulaski County a plot of ground to grow numerous vegetables. This is their second year to do so. For \$40 a year rent, they have a 25' x 50' section of ground for their use.

The price includes water, with easy access to faucets. The initial tilling is performed by the manager of the plots and he will also spade it for a nominal sum. Ben estimates that there are 200 plots on this particular piece of property.

The season runs from March 1 to December 1. This year they are growing squash, acorn squash, okra, green beans, pole beans, black eye peas, several varieties of tomatoes, lettuce, onions, spinach and sunflowers! To help protect the environment, other than Sevin Dust, the Houstons have avoided using any pesticides.

Last year, deer became a problem. "The deer simply jumped the fence and ate what they wanted, okra for the most part." Ben said. But this year they have added 2 feet of height to the fencepost and added florescent streamers to the twine for visual effect. So far, no deer problems.

When asked why they are growing vegetables, Ben replied that it's something they have always wanted to do. They are certainly living off the earth and putting it to good use.

Cohen, his wife, and Hankins

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Justice Building Employees Retire In June

A retirement party was held in the Justice Bldg. in June for AOC employees, Rose Moore and Maggie Honorable. Maggie's position at the AOC for the last seven years was Trial Court Administrative Assistant. She assisted Donna Gay, staff attorney, with the recusals and assignments for the circuit judges. Rose had been with the AOC for 27 years, one of the longest times served by an AOC employee. She was a Financial Officer.

In addition, Pat Carpenter, Justice Building Security Officer, retired this summer after serving the State in that capacity and others for 37 years. We wish them all well as they pursue their retirement dreams!



(Left to right) Maggie Honorable, Chief Justice Hannah and Rose Moore.



Long time employees of the AOC gathered together for a picture to celebrate their years of service. (Left to right) Nancy Jewell — 25 years, John Stewart — 30 years, Rose Moore — 27 years, Keith Caviness — 28 years, Joyce French — 24 years, and JD Gingerich — 20 years.



Chief Justice Hannah (center) and honoree, Pat Carpenter, listened as Judge Larry Vaught read a letter from the Court of Appeals thanking Pat for his service.



Retirement Honorees, Maggie and Rose, were surprised by a stretch limousine arriving at the Justice Bldg. to give them a ride. The limo was compliments of a family member of Maggie's. (One party attendee jokingly asked, "A new state car?")

"The trouble with retirement is that you never get a day off."

— Abe Lemons



Green

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and Garvey rotate driving to Little Rock twice a week. Cohen figures that this represents a 60% reduction in gasoline consumption for each of them. He states that when they are all four in the car those two days each week, it is the equivalent of getting 100 miles per gallon (assuming each of their cars averages 25 m.p.g. on the highway.)

What are you doing to help protect the environment? Actions, ideas, thoughts from readers of "Friends of the Court" are welcome and can be sent to karolyn.bond@arkansas.gov.



The Houstons' Vegetable Plot

Current Issues in State Courts

The 2007 Annual Report for the National Center for State Courts highlights the various issues that are currently prominent in state courts. Judicial independence, pro se litigants, court security, performance measurement, societal problems, and jury improvement are some of the areas being addressed by state courts today.

- Judges must have the independence to make unpopular decisions when necessary and still be able to effectively campaign when facing a strong challenge in an election.

- The increasing number of litigants who represent themselves brings about challenges to judges and court staff: Is it unfair to the other parties in the case to provide help to a pro se litigant? Can help be given by court staff and not be considered actual legal advice? What is the best way for the courts to provide appropriate and inform-

ative help to those who represent themselves?

- Keeping courts secure while maintaining open access to the court system for the public, and what courts should do when a disaster strikes, such as Hurricane Katrina, are current issues facing the courts.
- Court are using technical assistance to measure their performance in providing efficient and fair justice.
- Societal problems of drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, and mental illness are being addressed with special courts that are striving to solve the problem of recurring contact with the court system because of underlying medical and social issues.
- Courts are endeavoring to enhance jury duty for those citizens called to serve. Positive experiences when serving on a jury increase the public's confidence in the courts.

In Memory

Judge Richard Mobley, long time chancellor for the Fifth Judicial Circuit, passed away on July 4, 2008. Judge Mobley was elected as a chancellor in 1962 and remained on the bench until his retirement in 1990. Along with many other honors, he served as President of the Arkansas Judicial Council in 1975 and 1976, and was instrumental in introducing a uniform schedule of child support payments, which is the basis for the family support formulas used today by judges.

CORRECTION
Judicial Race Result
Corrected results of contested judicial race District 01, Div. 2, Subdistrict 1.2.
Judge Richard Proctor
defeated Todd Murray.



New faces in the Judiciary

AOC

ACAP - Training Manager - **Jackie DeBusk.**

ACAP - Contract Business Analyst - **Jan Menasco.**

ACAP - Contract Help Desk Agent - **Matthew Young.**

ACAP - **Wes Harris** replaces Janet Bayless.

Financial Officer - **Vicki Herron**

replaces Rose Moore.

Trial Court Assistant - **Dawn Thompson** replaces Maggie Honorable.

Administrative Assistant - **Michelle Maxwell** replaces Dawn Thompson.

District Court Clerks

Batesville - **Dianna Melton** replaces Donna Gay.

Cotton Plant - **Rebecca Boyles** replaces Treda Robinson.

District Court Judges

DeQueen - **Stephen Tedder** is the judge.

Trial Court Assistants

18th E. (Wright) - **Sherri Daniels** replaces Pam McLane.

21st (Medlock) - **Linda Walker** replaces Angela Johnson.

CALENDAR

August

Appellate Mediation Training (Justice Bldg.) **1**

Court Interpreter Orientation (Little Rock) **1-2**

District Court Clerks Certification – Chief Clerks (Fayetteville) **15**

Family Mediation Training (Justice Bldg.) **20-22**

September

District Judges Fall College (Fort Smith) **25-27**

October

Fall Judicial College/Judicial Council Mtg. (Jonesboro) **15-17**

Court Reporters' Annual Conference (Jonesboro) **17-18**

Kids Are Quick

Teacher: Maria, go to the map and find North America.

Maria: Here it is.

Teacher: Correct. Now class, who discovered America?

Class: Maria.

Summer Fun



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Address Correction Requested



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inquiries are welcome.

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